

WHAT IS CLAIMED IS:

1. A protecting member for use with a developing device including a developing roller, for developing an electrostatic latent image formed on an electrophotographic photosensitive member, having an elastic roller portion and a shaft portion supporting the elastic roller portion, said developing device further including a developer regulating member contactable to the elastic roller portion to regulate an amount of the developer deposited on the elastic roller portion, said protecting member comprising:
 - a contact portion provided at a side for contact with the elastic roller portion when said protecting member is demountably mounted between the developing roller and the developer regulating member; and
 - a supporting portion for supporting said contact portion, said supporting portion being provided at a side for contact with the elastic roller portion when said protecting member is demountably mounted between the developing roller and the developer regulating member,wherein said contact portion has a hardness which is not less than a predetermined value and not more than a hardness of the elastic roller portion.

2. A protecting member according to Claim 1,

wherein said contact portion is elastic.

3. A protecting member according to Claim 1,
wherein said supporting portion includes a sheet of
5 polyethylene terephthalate resin material.

4. A protecting member according to Claim 1, 2
or 3, wherein said contact portion has a thickness of
0.5mm-2mm, and said supporting portion has a thickness
10 of approx. 150 μ m.

5. A protecting member according to Claim 1,
wherein the hardness of said contact portion is 5⁰ -
45⁰ (Asker C hardness).
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6. A protecting member according to Claim 1,
wherein said contact portion has a volume resistivity
not more than 10^{10} Ohm.cm.

20 7. A developing cartridge detachably mountable
to a main assembly of an electrophotographic image
forming apparatus, said developing cartridge
comprising:

a developing roller, for developing an
25 electrostatic latent image formed on an
electrophotographic photosensitive member, having an
elastic roller portion and a shaft portion supporting

the elastic roller portion,

a developer regulating member contactable to the elastic roller portion to regulate an amount of the developer deposited on the elastic roller portion;

5 a protecting member including,

a contact portion provided at a side for contact with the elastic roller portion when said protecting member is demountably mounted between the developing roller and the developer regulating member;

10 and

a supporting portion for supporting said contact portion, said supporting portion being provided at a side for contact with the elastic roller portion when said protecting member is demountably

15 mounted between the developing roller and the developer regulating member,

wherein said contact portion has a hardness which is not less than a predetermined value and not more than a hardness of the elastic roller portion.

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8. A process cartridge according to Claim 7, wherein said contact portion is elastic.

9. A process cartridge according to Claim 7, wherein said supporting portion includes a sheet of polyethylene terephthalate resin material.

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10. A process cartridge according to Claim 7, 8 or 9, wherein said contact portion has a thickness of 0.5mm-2mm, and said supporting portion has a thickness of approx. 150 μ m.

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11. A process cartridge according to Claim 7, wherein the hardness of said contact portion is 5⁰ - 45⁰ (Asker C hardness).

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12. A process cartridge according to Claim 7, wherein said contact portion has a volume resistivity not more than 10^{10} Ohm. cm.

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13. A process cartridge according to Claim 7 or 12, wherein said developer regulating member includes a resilient metal plate.

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14. A process cartridge detachably mountable to a main assembly of an electrophotographic image forming apparatus, said process cartridge comprising:

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an electrophotographic photosensitive member;
a developing roller, for developing an electrostatic latent image formed on an electrophotographic photosensitive member, having an elastic roller portion and a shaft portion supporting the elastic roller portion;

a developer regulating member contactable to

the elastic roller portion to regulate an amount of
the developer deposited on the elastic roller portion;

a protecting member including,

a contact portion provided at a side for
5 contact with the elastic roller portion when said
protecting member is demountably mounted between the
developing roller and the developer regulating member;
and

a supporting portion for supporting said
10 contact portion, said supporting portion being
provided at a side for contact with the elastic roller
portion when said protecting member is demountably
mounted between the developing roller and the
developer regulating member,

15 wherein said contact portion has a hardness
which is not less than a predetermined value and not
more than a hardness of the elastic roller portion.

15. A process cartridge according to Claim 14,
20 wherein said contact portion is elastic.

16. A process cartridge according to Claim 14,
wherein said supporting portion includes a sheet of
polyethylene terephthalate resin material.

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17. A process cartridge according to Claim 14, 15
or 16, wherein said contact portion has a thickness of

0.5mm-2mm, and said supporting portion has a thickness of approx. 150 μ m.

18. A process cartridge according to Claim 14,
5 wherein the hardness of said contact portion is 5⁰ - 45⁰ (Asker C hardness).

19. A process cartridge according to Claim 14,
wherein said contact portion has a volume resistivity
10 not more than 10^{10} Ohm. cm.

20. A process cartridge according to Claim 14 or
19, wherein said developer regulating member includes
a resilient metal plate.

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